

Lincoln History

Written by Administrator

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In 1852 Logan County was a popular place for settlers. The reason Logan County was so popular was the easy access to the waterways (Kickapoo, Salt, and Sugar creeks) and the abundance of wildlife. However, what made Lincoln so desirable was the future railroad.

When the government wanted to connect Springfield to Bloomington they ran in to a small problem. Springfield and Bloomington were nearly 60 miles apart and the steam trains of the day required a water stop point every 30 miles and the railroad required a passenger depot every 30 miles. This water point and passenger depot would be in Lincoln.

When realizing that Lincoln would be the railroad stop, people quickly realized that this would be a great opportunity. Seizing this opportunity became the goal of three business men. These business men created a business venture called the Town Site Company. These three men were Virgil Hickcox, a director of the railroad, John D. Gillett, a cattle raiser known as "Cattle King of the World" in future years and landowner in Cornland, and Robert B. Latham, the Sheriff of Logan County. The first step in creating Lincoln was obtaining the rights to the land. The venture needed to purchase the land that was owned by Isaac and Joseph B. Loose. In order to purchase the land, Sheriff Latham traveled to Franklin County, Pennsylvania where Isaac Loose lived. On February 3, 1853 Sheriff Latham purchased the land from Isaac and Joseph B. Loose for \$1,350. In order to continue with the development of the new town of Lincoln, the Town Site Company realized that were need of some legal assistance. So Virgil Hickcox called on his friend and neighbor to help with the legal matters. The attorney's name was Abraham Lincoln. Then a week and half later after purchasing the land, the proposed town of Lincoln became the new county seat after a bill was passed to move the county seat from Mt. Pulaski to the City of Lincoln.

The next step in the process was to design the City of Lincoln. The County Surveyor, Conway Pence, designed the City of Lincoln around the railroad. All the streets ran parallel and perpendicular to the railroad. In addition, he designed four blocks that were for the county. In these four blocks were to be two parks, one court house and one jail. Now that the city was planned, it was time to bring in the people. On August 24, 1853, the men of Town Site Company met with Abraham Lincoln at his law office. Sheriff Latham was appointed to be the representative and it was announced that the new town would be named Lincoln. There is some controversy over who had the original idea to name the town Lincoln. Sheriff Latham claims that he had the idea. However, John Gillett's daughter insists it was her mother's idea. Unfortunately, no one knows who named the town Lincoln, but Lincoln will always be the first town named after Abraham Lincoln before he became president.

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